

SLIDE 1

OLDER ADULT TOOLKIT | Presented by **Presenter Name** | Date



**SAFE MEDICATION PRACTICES
FOR BETTER HEALTH**

GenerationRx
Safe medication practices for life.

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COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

CardinalHealth
FOUNDATION

(Title slide – insert presenter names and date, if desired)

We are here, today, to discuss how you can get the most from your medications and do so safely.

This program was developed by the Generation Rx Initiative at the Ohio State University College of Pharmacy, in partnership with the Cardinal Health Foundation.

SLIDE 2

Overview



Be Your Own Advocate



Learn Safe Medication Practices



Know the Risks of Medication Misuse

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Transition: We will spend our time together focusing on three areas relating to medication use:

1. Be your own health advocate – straightforward tips for being an informed user of medications
2. Be safe with your medicines – important information about “safe medication practices for life”
3. Know the risks of medication misuse – facts about medication misuse in our country and what you can do about it

SLIDE 3

Medications help us live longer and healthier lives, but when not used properly, they can produce harmful effects.





OLDER ADULT TOOLKIT | 3

Transition: The prescribing of medications is the most common type of medical treatment in the United States, and pharmacists dispense over four billion prescriptions each year. (Kaiser Family Foundation statistics)¹

1. These medications help us live longer and healthier lives, but they can also produce harmful effects when not used properly.
2. In fact, medication problems are thought to cause between 10-30% of all hospital admissions in older people. (*Age and Ageing* 2014;43(2):174-187 and *J Am Geriatr Soc* 2018; 66:282-288.)^{2,3}
3. American Academy of Family Physicians recommend limiting the number of prescription medications whenever possible because each new medication adds more than one adverse drug event each year. With 6 or more medications this risk goes up four-fold. (*Am Fam Physician* 2013;87(5):331-336)⁴
4. So, how can you get the best results from your medications and do so safely? Here are a few simple things you can do:

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BE YOUR OWN HEALTH ADVOCATE



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Transition: Let's start off by focusing on how to be your own health advocate, especially as it pertains to medications.

You are the most important member of your healthcare team. Take the time to become an expert about your medications. Ask questions and get all the information you need to get the best results from your medications!

SLIDE 5

Overview

- When is the best time of day to take the medication?
- Is it safe to crush or split tablets?
- Should I take it with or without food?
- What side effects most commonly occur?
- What should I do if I forget to take a dose?



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Transition: Being an informed consumer is the best way to get the most out of any purchase, and medications are no different. In fact, learning about your medications is critical for getting the best health outcomes.


- Ask questions -- here are suggestions for questions you may wish to ask your doctor or pharmacist:
 - What is the best time of day to take the medication?
 - Is it safe to crush or split tablets?
 - Should I take it with or without food?
 - What side effects most commonly occur?
 - What should I do if I forget to take a dose?

Take the initiative to learn about your medications, ask questions of your doctor and pharmacist, and become an expert about your medicines!

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Keep a complete Medication Record

Medication Name	Other Names	Directions	Use	Prescriber	Other Information
Lisinopril 20 mg	Prinivil	Take 1 tablet once daily	Blood Pressure	Dr. Sam Jones	Avoid salt substitutes
Omeprazole 20 mg	Prilosec	Take 1 capsule in the evening	Heartburn/Indigestion	Dr. Sam Jones	Take on an empty stomach
Tylenol Extra Strength 500 mg	Acetaminophen	Take 1-2 tablets every 6 hours as needed	Arthritis Pain	OTC	Do not take more than 6 tablets in a day Do not drink alcohol
Senior Multivitamin		Take 1 tablet once daily	Supplement	OTC	



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Transition: An updated medication record is probably the most important tool to help guide you to safe medication use. Always keep an updated, complete record of your prescription and nonprescription medications and carry it with you.

Download the medication record form at [GenerationRx.org](https://www.GenerationRx.org) and use it to record:

- The brand and generic name of your medications
- Strength and dosing directions (be specific about the time of day you are taking the medication)
- The name of the prescriber, meaning the person that wrote the prescription for you
- Brief descriptions of the specific use of each medication (i.e., What are you taking it for?)
- Any special instructions (e.g., "Take with food")

Those involved in your care must know all the medications you are taking to help you maintain good health. This is the best way to avoid potentially harmful interactions between your medications and other prescription or nonprescription drugs or herbal products. So, be sure to share your complete medication record with your doctor and pharmacist. It is also always smart to have all of your prescriptions filled at the same pharmacy so that your pharmacist is aware of all of the medications you are taking.

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Use your pharmacist as a resource

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Transition: Your community pharmacist can be a useful resource.

1. Your pharmacist is a wonderful resource for information about your prescription and non-prescription medications. She or he is an expert in “medication therapy management.” Your insurance plan may even pay for a visit with a pharmacist for a comprehensive review of all your medications, as well as assistance in trouble-shooting any problems that you may be having with your medication. For example, Medicare Part D may pay for your pharmacist to sit down and review your medications with you at no charge! Consider asking your community pharmacist if you qualify for this service.
2. Medications can be very expensive even if you have some prescription coverage. Your pharmacist may be able to help you find a more affordable option. A few options they might suggest would be:
 - If your prescription is for a brand-name drug, your pharmacist would know if it is available as a less costly generic.
 - Most drug manufacturers have programs for supplying needed medications to those who can't afford them – your pharmacist may be able to help.
 - The doctor's office or manufacturer's website may have coupons available, usually for brand-name medications.
 - Special clinics may be available in your area if you can't afford the care you need. These may have names such as “free clinic” or “charitable pharmacy.”

Your state, county or city health department may also have programs to help with medication costs.

(see [medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov/resources) resources)⁵

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Transition: Another great place to look for medication information is the label on your prescription.

1. In addition to the name of the medication and directions on how to take it, you will also find other useful information like the number of tablets or capsules dispensed to you from the pharmacy, the name of the prescriber, the date of dispensing as well as the date the prescription was written by the doctor, available refills remaining, and other helpful information about the medication such as caution statements like “Take with Food” or “Avoid Alcohol.”
2. If given a prescription with the label shown on this slide, when would you take it? (Allow audience responses) In this case, the best time to take the medication is not necessarily 12 hours apart (twice daily), but with the morning and evening meals since it is a medication to help with blood sugar and is best taken with food.
3. Your pharmacist can always provide advice about how and when to take your medications. All you have to do is ask!

SLIDE 9

Drug Facts Active ingredient (in each caplet) Acetaminophen 500 mg. <i>Pain reliever/fever reducer</i>	
Uses ■ temporarily relieves minor aches and pains due to: ■ the common cold ■ headache ■ minor pain of arthritis ■ backache ■ muscular aches ■ toothache ■ premenstrual and menstrual cramps ■ temporarily reduces fever	
Warnings Liver warnings: This product contains acetaminophen. Severe liver damage may occur if you take: ■ more than 4,000 mg of acetaminophen in 24 hours ■ with other drugs containing acetaminophen ■ 3 or more alcoholic drinks every day while using this product Always alert: Acetaminophen may cause severe skin reactions. Symptoms may include: ■ skin redness ■ hives ■ rash If a skin reaction occurs, stop use and seek medical help right away. Do not use ■ with any other drug containing acetaminophen (prescription or nonprescription). If you are not sure whether a drug contains acetaminophen, ask a doctor or pharmacist. ■ if you have ever had an allergic reaction to this product or any of its ingredients Ask a doctor before use if you have liver disease Ask a doctor or pharmacist before use if you are taking the blood thinning drug warfarin	
Drug Facts (continued) Stop use and ask a doctor if: ■ pain gets worse or lasts more than 10 days ■ fever gets worse or lasts more than 3 days ■ new symptoms occur ■ redness or swelling is present These could be signs of a serious condition. If pregnant or breast-feeding, ask a health professional before use. Keep out of reach of children. Overdose warning: In case of overdose, get medical help or contact a Poison Control Center right away (1-800-222-1222). Quick medical attention is critical for adults as well as for children even if you do not notice any signs or symptoms.	
Directions ■ do not take more than directed (see overdose warning) adults and children 12 years and over ■ take 2 caplets every 6 hours while symptoms last ■ do not take more than 6 caplets in 24 hours, unless directed by a doctor ■ do not use for more than 10 days unless directed by a doctor children under 12 years ask a doctor Other information ■ store at 20-25°C (68-77°F) Inactive ingredients: carmellose sodium, croscarmellose sodium, hypromellose, polyethylene glycol, povidone, pregelatinized starch, sodium starch glycolate, stearic acid. *may contain one or more of these ingredients	
Questions or comments? 1-800-719-9200	

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Transition: Similarly, a convenient place to get information about non-prescription medications is the standard label found on such products.

1. The “Drug Facts” label, as it is called, has useful information about the product such as:⁶

- Active ingredients: many non-prescription products contain more than one active ingredient. (In the example above the active ingredient is Acetaminophen, generic Tylenol)
- Uses: symptoms or conditions the product will treat or prevent
- Warnings: when not to use the product
- Inactive ingredients: for example, color dyes or flavorings
- Purpose: product action or category such as antihistamine, antacid, or cough suppressant
- Directions: how much to take, how to take and how often, and how long to take the medication
- Other information: such as how to store the medication

2. The information on the Drug Facts label can be helpful, but the best advice is to always consult your doctor or pharmacist about using nonprescription medications along with your prescribed medications.

(information taken from www.fda.gov/drugresourcesforyou/ucm133411.htm)⁶

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Anything you take can impact your medication therapy

- Food
- Drink (including alcohol)
- Other prescriptions
- Non-prescription medications
- Herbal products
- Vitamins



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Transition: Keep in mind anything that you take can impact your medication therapy. This could include food, drinks (both alcohol and non-alcohol), other prescription or nonprescription medications, herbal products, or dietary supplements.

1. For example, patients who are taking the drug Coumadin, also called Warfarin (WAR-far-in), to keep their blood thin and prevent clotting as easily must be careful. A number of things including other drugs, and even some foods, could interfere with their therapy. For instance, patients taking Coumadin must be careful not to take products containing ibuprofen or naproxen. Doing so could increase their chance for bleeding side effects. Unless their doctor advises them to do so, they should avoid ibuprofen or naproxen when taking Coumadin (Warfarin).
2. Red Yeast Rice, an herbal supplement, interacts with many cholesterol lowering medications such as Simvastatin (generic for Zocor) and Atorvastatin (generic for Lipitor). Herbal products like Red Yeast Rice may provide benefits, but they are not closely regulated by the FDA. It is extremely important to be well informed before deciding to try an herbal product. A wonderful free resource for unbiased information is from The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine in the National Institutes of Health (see: www.nccam.nih.gov).⁷

These are just two examples of the many potential interactions between the medications, food, and drink you consume on a regular basis. Be sure to use your pharmacist as a resource to make sure you can take your specific combination together safely.

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Having a new symptom or health issue?

Ask yourself: *"Did this start after doing something different with my medications?"*

If you think you are having a side effect from a medication:

- If severe (e.g., trouble breathing or bleeding), call 911
- Otherwise, contact your doctor or pharmacist to discuss your new symptoms



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Transition: If you are having a new symptom or health issue, it is always a good idea to consider if it could be due to any of your medications.

1. When used properly, medications can help us live longer and healthier lives. They can treat diseases, relieve symptoms, and prevent certain diseases from occurring in the first place. But any medication can also produce harmful effects, so it is important to remember this. If you are having difficulties, consult your doctor or pharmacist.
2. If you are having problems, think about the timing of when it started. Ask yourself, "Did I start feeling this way soon after doing something different?" Potential changes include:
 - starting a new prescription or over-the-counter medication
 - a change (increase or decrease) in medication strength or dose
 - a change in the way you are taking your medication
 - drinking an alcoholic beverage
 - a change in your diet (e.g., grapefruit can affect some medications such as blood pressure and cholesterol medications)
3. If you think you are having a side effect from a medication, here are actions to take:
 - If it is a severe side effect such as trouble breathing or bleeding, call 911
 - Otherwise, contact your doctor or pharmacist to discuss your new symptoms and ask if this is a usual side effect of your medications. Ask if there are steps you can take to make you feel better.

SLIDE 12



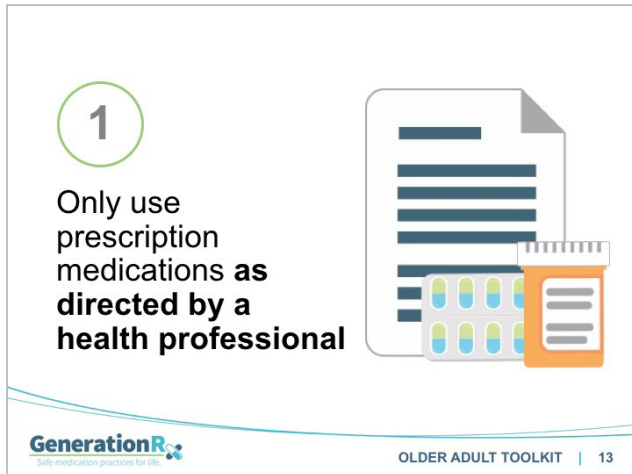
LEARN SAFE MEDICATION PRACTICES



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Transition: We have been focusing on ways to be your own health advocate when it comes to medications, Now, we will discuss four steps you can take toward "safe medication practices to follow for life"

SLIDE 13



1

Only use prescription medications as directed by a health professional

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Transition: It is important to follow the directions provided with your prescription medications. Only make changes in your own medication therapy after talking with your doctor. Even stopping your therapy on your own can be harmful. For example, stopping antibiotic therapy too soon could result in a more severe infection, and the dosage of some drugs must be slowly decreased before stopping them all together.

1. Sticking with the plan - your medication regimen can be challenging when you have a chronic condition like diabetes or high blood pressure, but not doing so can cause harm. For example, diabetes that is not properly treated can result in heart disease, blindness, kidney failure, nerve damage, and other problems. It is estimated that we spend approximately \$300 billion each year in our healthcare system simply because patients don't take their medications as directed.¹⁴
2. It is also important to take your medications regularly. For most medications, this means every day or even multiple times a day. If you have trouble remembering, there are some simple things you can do. For example, some people use a calendar to keep track of the pills they have taken. Pill boxes which contain your medications for each day are also helpful, and there are more sophisticated tools available including special medication alarms or electronic reminders.

Note to Facilitator: Ask your audience to share ideas they use to remember to take their medications.

3. Avoid stopping a medication without talking to your doctor or pharmacist, even if it doesn't seem to be working. Sometimes medication therapy takes a while to take effect or the effects may not even be noticeable.

SLIDE 14

2

Do not share or take someone else's medication





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Transition: Second, never share your prescription medications with others or use someone else's prescription drugs.

1. Many factors determine how we respond to medication—our genetics, weight, and pre-existing medical conditions, amongst others. Therefore, individuals can respond to the same medication differently.
2. Engaging in behaviors of self-diagnosis and self-prescribing is dangerous—always report any health concerns to a healthcare professional. Don't self-medicate!
3. Regardless of intention, sharing or taking someone else's medication is not safe. Only use medications under the guidance of a healthcare professional.

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3

Keep your medications safe: storage





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Transition: Third, keep your medications secure through safe storage and disposal practices. First, we'll discuss storage. How do you safely store medications?

Note to facilitator: encourage participants to suggest safe storage places.

1. When prescribed a prescription medication, store medications in secure locations such as lockboxes, medication safes, or other lockable spaces.
2. Avoid storage places which children and others can easily access, such as drawers, nightstands, or kitchen counters/cabinets.
3. Unfortunately, most people who misuse prescription drugs get them from family members or friends. Help keep others safe by storing your medications safely!

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Transition: Next, we'll discuss disposal. Once finished with a prescription medication, you have three options for safe disposal:

1. Option Number One: Place the medication in a drug dropbox. To find a dropbox in your area, visit: rxdrugdropbox.org.
2. Option Number Two: Take advantage of community drug take-back programs that allow the public to bring unused drugs to a central location for proper disposal. Call your local law enforcement agency or ask your pharmacist or local health department to see if a take-back program is available in your community.

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Transition: If there is not a drug dropbox or take-back program near you, there is a third option that allows for safe disposal at home.

1. Before completing these steps, we encourage you to follow any disposal instructions on the drug's label or patient information sheet.
2. If disposal instructions are not given, complete these three steps:
 - Step 1: Remove the pills from the original container and mix them with an undesirable substance such as used coffee grounds or kitty litter
 - Step 2: Throw away the sealed mixture into the trash.
 - Step 3: Remove the prescription label and dispose of the empty bottle.
3. In general, you should not flush medications down a toilet or drain; however, the FDA still recommends that certain drugs should be disposed of by flushing (for a list, visit: www.fda.gov).⁸
4. Again, those who misuse prescription medications often get them from friends and family – this is why it is so important to safely store and dispose of medications.

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4

Model safe medication practices





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Transition: Fourth, be a good example to those around you by modeling these safe medication-taking practices. What others see you do matters!

When appropriate, discuss the dangers of misusing prescription drugs with your family, friends, and others in your community. You can make a difference!

SLIDE 19



KNOW THE RISKS OF MEDICATION MISUSE



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Transition: It's important when talking with others to spread the word about an increasing problem in our country – prescription drug misuse. Prescription drugs are misused by millions of Americans at every age.⁹

Note to facilitator: Ask “What do you consider prescription misuse?”

SLIDE 20

Prescription drug misuse is:



Taking more medication than prescribed



Taking medication for a reason different than prescribed



Sharing or taking someone else's medication

Regardless of intentions



OLDER ADULT TOOLKIT | 20

Transition: We define prescription drug misuse as engaging in three key behaviors.

1. Taking more of a prescription medication than prescribed.
2. Taking a prescription medication for a reason different than prescribed.
3. Sharing or taking someone else's prescription medication.

(Note for facilitator: If asked, the National Institute of Health drafted and currently supports these definitions of prescription drug misuse.¹⁰⁾

Regardless of the intention or reason, engaging in any of these behaviors is misuse. Unfortunately, prescription drug misuse has become an epidemic in our country, and it can lead to tragic consequences!

SLIDE 21

This epidemic affects all of us

Drug overdose is our country's leading cause of accidental death.

Most people who use heroin or other illicit drugs first misuse a prescription medication.



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Transition: This epidemic affects all of us.

1. There is no stereotypical “type” of person susceptible to prescription drug misuse.
2. Prescription drug misuse occurs from the very young through the very old. It occurs in rural and suburban communities among those of all socioeconomic status. This is not a “youth” issue. These risks apply to everyone, including older adults.
3. The National Survey on Drug Use and Health tells us that nearly 20 million Americans misuse prescription medications, such as opioid pain medications (e.g., OxyContin, Vicodin, Lortab), sedatives (e.g., Xanax, Valium), or stimulants (e.g., Adderall, Ritalin) every year.¹¹
4. Accidental drug overdose is our leading cause of accidental death in the U.S. (source CDC). For those under 50 years of age, it is the leading cause of death from any cause. A majority of these deaths are due to opioid overdoses (including the use of illicit drugs like heroin or synthetic fentanyl or cardentanil), but 80% of heroin users first misused a prescription opioid.¹¹
5. This is an important reason to properly use, store, and dispose of these medications to protect ourselves and those around us.

Note for facilitator: based on your audience, you may wish to share some of the statistics listed below.

General statistic:

1. Over 6 million Americans aged 12 and older reported misusing a prescription medication in the past month [National Survey on Drug Use & Health (NSDUH)].¹¹

Statistics to share with older adults:

1. Prescription drug misuse has been projected to increase 1.2% in 2001 to 2.4 % in 2020 among older adults.¹²
2. SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) estimates the number of older adults requiring substance misuse treatment by 2020 to be 4.4 million (increased from 1.7 million in 2003).¹³

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SLIDE 21 (CONT.)

This epidemic affects all of us

Drug overdose is our country's leading cause of accidental death.

Most people who use heroin or other illicit drugs first misuse a prescription medication.



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(CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

3. Research estimates 17% of senior citizens struggle with a substance misuse problem (SAMHSA, 2012).¹³
4. Emergency department visits involving misuse of prescription opioids by older adults increased 121% between 2004 – 2008 (SAMHSA, 2012).¹³

Note for facilitator: the statistics in #1-2 for older adults reflect substance misuse in general—this is not a statistic specific for prescription drug misuse.

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Here is what you can do to help



- Be informed
- Discuss all medication issues with your doctor and pharmacist
- Safely store and dispose of medications
- Join in the effort to spread the word about safe and appropriate medication use

Together we will make a difference

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Transition: With your help, we can make an impact on the medication misuse epidemic.

It is important to:

- Be informed about your specific medications
- Discuss all medication issues you may have with your doctor and pharmacist
- Safely store and dispose of medications to help make sure they do not end up in the wrong hands
- Join in the effort to spread the word about safe and appropriate medication use – get involved in the educational efforts.

Together we will make a difference!

SLIDE 23

Summary

- Be Your Own Advocate
- Learn Safe Medication Practices
- Know the Risks of Medication Misuse

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OLDER ADULT TOOLKIT | 23

Getting the most from your medications and doing so safely can be done!

Remember to:

1. Be your own health advocate:
 - Learn about your medications
 - Keep a complete medication record
 - Use your pharmacist as a trusted resource
 - If you are having a new symptom or health issue, consider if it might be due to a new medication
2. Learn safe medication practices:
 - Only use prescription medications as directed
 - Do not share or take someone else's medication
 - Properly store and dispose of your medications
 - Model safe medication practices
3. Know the risks of prescription drug misuse and help us spread the word!

For more information on how you can be involved go to GenerationRx.org.

SLIDE 24

Questions?

Take the survey at GenerationRx.org/take-the-survey/

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Transition: Does anyone have any questions or comments?

Before we end, we do encourage you to take a survey evaluating today's program at GenerationRx.org/take-the-survey/. We value your feedback to help us assess the impact of this work and continually improve Generation Rx materials.

Note to facilitator: we encourage you, as the presenter, to also complete this survey. Thank you for advocating safe medication practices in your community.

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See Facilitator's Guide for more information



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